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NAVY MEDICINE IN FOCUS

Reunited

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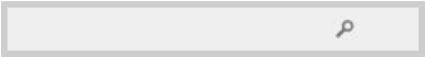
Cmdr. Cindy Murray, a senior nursing officer assigned to Naval Medical Center San Diego's (NMCSD) Military Health Center, holds hands with her brother, Chief Aviation Ordnanceman Robert Williamson assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 122 at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif., for the first time in more than 30 years. Murray lost all contact with her brother after her parents split up; she was just eight years old at the time. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Justin W. Galvin)

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Sean P. Lenahan | Naval Medical Center San Diego Public Affairs

The term “Navy family” took on a whole new meaning for two Sailors serving less than 320 miles apart. Cmdr. Cindy Murray, a senior nursing officer assigned to Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCSD)'s Military Health Center, was separated at the age of eight from her brother Chief Aviation Ordnanceman Robert Williamson assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 122 at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif., says, “I remember holding him in my arms when he was just a tiny baby.”

Uprooted from her home in the greater Denver area, Murray lost all contact with her brother after her father and mother split up in the late 1970s. Williamson remained with his father and stayed in Denver. Each sibling searched high and low for the other, making it their personal mission to recover what they had lost.

“I waited my whole life to see him again,” said Murray.



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Both were unknowingly elusive from each other at times.

"I've known Cindy was there and I have always tried to locate her, but I could never lock down where exactly she was," added Williamson.

At long last, with both of them having more than 20 years in the service, the Navy became the conduit to find each other.

"I [called] my father, who I hadn't spoken to since I was 20, and he tells me Robert is in the Navy. I got my chief and said 'find this name, this is my brother!'" said Murray.

Murray's leading chief petty officer (LCPO), Chief Petty Officer Hospital Corpsman Jeremy Simon, made the connection possible.



Chief Aviation Ordnanceman Robert Williamson assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 122 at Naval Air Station Lemoo Calif., wipes tears off the face of his sister Cmdr. Cindy Murray, a senior nursing officer assigned to Naval Medical Center S Diego's (NMCSD) Military Health Center, after meeting for the first time in more than 30 years. (Photo by Mass Communica Specialist Seaman Justin W. Galvin)

"She learned that he may be a chief petty officer and asked if I knew how to find him. Someone asked me for help and I just did what I do, I helped. I figured she would fill me in on the back side once everything calmed down," said Simon.

Williamson then received a mysterious phone call.

"It was kind of funny. Being a chief [in the Navy] we have chiefs everywhere. I was at work really busy and then I was told that there is [a chief] and a commander from San Diego that is on the phone for me," explained Williamson.

Simon was able to locate Williamson and connect him to his sister via telephone within 30 minutes. Things became even more surreal when the two of them actually spoke to each other over the phone.

"I said, 'This is your sister Cindy, I can't even believe this is happening. Do you have any idea how long I have been looking for you? I've looked for you forever and here you are in the Navy, we were practically under each other's noses,'" said Murray, choking up. "It was a very emotional phone call."

Williamson explains what it was like on his end of that fated phone call.

"It was overwhelming! You have a million questions that you want to ask. I was so excited I even forgot to ask what she does in the Navy," said Williamson.

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The two shared information about their lives and noticed a lot of similarities.

“Colorado is more known for the people joining the Air Force or National Guard there, we weren’t really around the Navy. But knowing we are both still making a career out of it ... is kind of weird,” said Williamson.

For Murray it was the simple things that she found interesting.

“We both love goldfish crackers and we both love the same types of TV shows,” said Murray.

Now in constant dialogue through emails, social media and phone calls, the brother and sister have a lot of catching up to do.

“After the first phone call, our Facebook pages imploded. We sent each other pictures immediately and we both posted mutual stories,” said Murray.

With the reunion came new family members from Williamson’s side for Murray.

“My wife is just ecstatic, I didn’t really have any immediate family and now I have someone! I have three boys and a grandson and they are all surprised. Since the kids are older it’s a lot easier because they are all very understanding,” said Williamson.

They even talked about spending future vacations and holidays together.



ndr. Cindy Murray, a senior nursing officer assigned to Naval Medical Center San Diego’s (NMCSD) Military Health Center, embraces her brother, Chief Aviation Ordnanceman Robert Williamson, assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 122 at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif., for the first time in more than 30 years. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Justin W. Galvin)

“We are hoping to get together with his family in Cabo San Lucas for Christmas since I have a timeshare,” said Murray.

Simon shared his thoughts on the role he played in making this long-awaited reunion possible.

“Helping this family is one of the proudest moments in my career,” he said. “Our Navy is awesome and to find out that they are both serving does not surprise me. There is a bond among siblings and where one is serving you can usually find another,” Simon said.

Williamson explains what it’s like to finally having his sister in his life.

“The main thing is to never give up. Multiple times she looked and looked and one little phone call ended 30 years of no contact,” said Williamson. “Amazing. Outstanding.”

Williamson and Murray are currently coordinating their schedules to make an in person reunion possible. They continue to foster their relationship through phone, email, and social media.



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